



HOWARD COUNTY TOURISM NEWS

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2000+ tri-athletes competing in the SILVER Columbia Triathlon Including Chris McCormack, 2007's Ironman Hawaii World Champion

Ellicott City, MD—Howard County Tourism invites you to the SILVER Columbia Triathlon to watch 2,000+ tri-athletes from all over the USA compete in a 1.5K Swim, 41K Bike, 10K Run at Centennial Park in Ellicott City, Maryland on Sunday, May 18, 2008. The first wave of swimmers begin at 06:45AM at the boat dock on the south entrance of the park. Last year an estimated 5,000 spectators cheered the tri-athletes along the race routes in rural Howard County and across the finish line at Centennial Park. This year spectators will see Chris McCormack, 2007's Ironman Hawaii World Champion compete.

"In the past 25 years, the Columbia Triathlon has raised over \$3M for local non-profits. This sporting event has welcomed 2,000+ athletes each year for a weekend from almost all 50 states; including 13years to 82years old, Olympians, persons with disabilities and IRONMEN. The economic impact to the county of these athletes and their friends and family staying in hotels, shopping, dining and visiting local attractions is tremendous" said Rachelina Bonacci, Executive Director of Howard County Tourism. "The Columbia Triathlon is a celebration of athleticism and altruism and certainly Howard County's most exciting event!"

The Columbia Triathlon Association (a 501c-3 non-profit organization) plays an active part in Columbia and its environs and actively supports several local charities, among them: The ARC of Howard County, for developmentally affected youth and adults, The Special Olympics of Maryland, Howard County, The Lance Armstrong Foundation, The American Heart Foundation and several other very worthwhile causes. The goal of The Columbia Triathlon Association, Inc (CTA) is to establish high quality and safe events in the community and to provide support for those within the community who help and support us.

- **The SILVER Columbia Triathlon, one of the most revered and challenging of all Olympic Distance Triathlons in the USA.**
- **This year features a record entry list of 2,000+ from all over the USA and special guest competitors, Chris McCormack, 2007's Ironman Hawaii World Champion and the dazzling Desiree Ficker (originally from Potomac, MD) who placed 2nd at Ironman Hawaii 2006 and recently ran in the Olympic Marathon Qualifier in Boston.**
- **Washington, DC's Mayor Adrian Fenty, his father, brother and friends will again compete in the Columbia Triathlon.**

- **Cheer for 82 year “young” Bob Gralley running the 10K after a teammate bikes 41K miles and another swims 1.5K. Note the Erickson Retirement Communities-sponsored relay teammates are half his age, and Bob Gralley will be the oldest person ever to compete in the annual event**
- **Greg Remaly, the 2007 Columbia Triathlon Winner, will be defending his title.**
- **An awards ceremony is scheduled for 11:00AM for recognizing the day’s athletic achievement and celebrating 25 years of successes by the Columbia Triathlon. Howard County Councilman Greg Fox will present the Columbia Triathlon with a proclamation.**
- **Spectators, friends, family, volunteers and vendors are encouraged to use the NEW FREE shuttle service provided by Howard Transit from the headquarters hotel the Sheraton Columbia (10207 Wincopin Circle, Columbia, MD 21044) to the south entrance of Centennial Park on MD Route 108 on race day from 4:00AM-2:00PM**

“We are very proud of our contributions to causes that we feel are just and worthy of our support. We admire the human spirit, in all its forms, and encourage all to ‘enrich your lives’ and as Lance would say to, LIVE STRONG . We hope you can and will join us this Sunday at Centennial Park. Experience it, feel the energy, for it is unlike any other” said Robert Vigorito, Race Director of The Columbia Triathlon.

FUN FACTS:

- A woman spectator went into labor while husband transitioned from swim to bike, at wife’s insistence, husband completes Columbia Triathlon then rushes to Howard County General Hospital in time to witness the birth of their child
- A tri-athlete claimed he was knocked off his bike during the Columbia Triathlon by a turkey vulture
- David’s Natural Market donates buckets and buckets of special Columbia Triathlon pasta salad to feed all the athletes and all spectators at Centennial Park
- Oldest to complete Columbia Triathlon Marge Stahl, youngest Hunter Lussi (13)
- Max Prola has competed in every Columbia Triathlon, and will be recognized at the award ceremony for the Silver Columbia Triathlon
- Coldest Columbia Triathlon temperature 57*, hottest Columbia Triathlon temperature 98*
- Nightmare Graphics has designed all the Columbia Triathlon gear for 25 years
- Princeton Sports has been an official partner to the Columbia Triathlon for 25 years

FAMOUS PARTICIPANTS:

- **SOLDIER** Patrick Daniel Tillman, the football player from the Arizona Cardinals who left his professional sports career and enlisted in the United States Army in May 2002 in response to the attacks of 9/11. He was killed in action in Afghanistan
- **IRONMEN** Tim DeBoom, Boulder CO, has raced Columbia Triathlon and is a two Time Hawaii Ironman World champion, as has Scot Tinley also a two Time Hawaii Ironman Champion and Ironman Hall of Famers like Dave Scott. Peter Reid has also done the Columbia Triathlon
- **OLYMPIAN** Susan Williams & Matt Reed
- **INTERNATIONAL TRI-ATHELTE** Laurie Hug
- **WASHINGTON, DC MAYOR** Adrian Fenty

REMEMBRANCES:

- Joe Law - Clydesdale
- Joe Ammans – Male Masters
- Pat Tilman – Military
- Ralph Perry – Male Grand Masters
- Judy Flannery -- Female Masters

FROM RACE DIRECTOR ROBERT VIGORITO:

The year was 1980 and I and some friends had just watched this crazy event on ABC's Wide World of Sports, The Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon from the Island of Oahu. In those days, ABC was always "spanning" the globe to capture events such as the Ironman, you may recall, their motto, "The Thrill of Victory and The Agony of Defeat". Well it was about that time that a group of runners here in Columbia, Howard County Maryland, got together in the local club and discussed the possibility of hosting our own "Triathlon" here in Columbia. It would be called The Columbia Triathlon and as you could not swim in any of the CA lakes in town we would use the CA indoor pool Center in Wilde Lake Village. After many long discussions and we purchased the book of "How To" and off we went... The Columbia Triathlon was born in May 1984 and we got 90 people who signed up for this 10k run, 20 mile bike and 1k swim in the pool, in that order. The standard order of the event is swim-bike-run. It was a great fun and after year 2 the event was about to just die as those involved including the first 2 race directors were now in burn out mode. As I had been on the race committee, I offered to take the reins for 1986 and we would see how it worked out. I also decided that for this race to have any chance to grow we needed to swim in the newly formed Centennial Lake. All said, no way could this be done. That was 19 years ago!!

Well now in the year 2008, I am still the race director of the 25th running of the now nationally and internationally known Columbia Triathlon and Centennial Lake is THE place to be in May!! We have played host to 2 National Triathlon Championships and been featured on ESPN. Over 20,000 people have signed up to race in this great event over all this time. We now attract entrants from over 35 states and Canada. Columbia has been named/selected as a Regional USATriathlon Championship for over 12 years. Additionally, Columbia IS the Triathlon to do in the Eastern US. The event has become the season opening event in the region and is regarded by most as the most challenging of Triathlons at this distance. The distances are: Swim: 1.5k – Bike: 41k – Run: 10k. WE are the largest event of its kind in the Mid-Atlantic region and of course in Howard County."

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The Columbia Triathlon Association is a 501c-3 non-profit organization based in Columbia, MD that plays an active role in the community by supporting several local charities. It is currently in its 25th year of producing high quality events geared to attract all levels of abilities across the triathlon/multi-sport spectrum. This year, TriColumbia proudly presents the Silver Anniversary Columbia Triathlon on May 18 and the AFLAC Iron Girl Columbia Women's Triathlon on August 24. Also underdevelopment for this year is a new children's triathlon to be held in July. www.tricolumbia.org

The Howard County Tourism Council is recognized by Howard County Government and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development as the official Destination Marketing Organization for Howard County, Maryland. The Howard County Tourism Council's mission is to increase, develop and promote tourism in Howard County by featuring the county's unique sites, services, products, people AND OUR SIGNATURE EVENTS LIKE THE SILVER COLUMBIA TRIATHLON! For more information call 410-313-1900 or www.VisitHowardCounty.com